



State Senator

NOVEMBER 4, 2005

VALDE GARCIA

Serving the 22nd District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

COFFEE BREAK NEWS

“Protecting our waters” legislation introduced

A package of legislation was recently introduced entitled “Protecting our waters.” The package is comprised of three bills aimed at working toward a system that will focus on certain high capacity users of our waters. The focus will be on new and expanding high capacity users of water that want to withdraw in excess of 100,000 gallons a day. Although there is currently no water shortage in Michigan, a system is needed that is easy to use and continues to give a good measure of protection for Michigan’s water. Senator Garcia supports this package that aims to prevent this resource from becoming depleted.

Senate unanimously passes bills to benefit domestic violence victims

The Senate unanimously approved Senate Bills 120 and 263 aimed to amend the current Code of Criminal Procedure regarding domestic violence this week.

SB 120 amends the law to add a section that allows evidence of prior acts of domestic violence to be admissible evidence in a court proceeding. Domestic violence cases are often difficult to prosecute due to a lack of documented physical evidence. SB 120 would help improve the prosecution of domestic violence cases.

SB 263 would create an exception to the general rule of excluding hearsay evidence for statements made by victims of domestic violence to police officers. Statements made by domestic violence victims to police immediately following a domestic violence incident are often more reliable than a statement made in court. Victims are often coerced or intimidated by the defendant into changing their statement. Changing the law would allow police officers to testify in the case. SB 263 will create a hearsay exception if: the criminal action involves domestic violence, the statement describes the threat or infliction of personal injury, the statement was made at, or near the time of assault, the statement was made under circumstances that would indicate the statement’s trustworthiness, and the statement was made to a law enforcement official.

The bills will now move to the House for debate.

Senate passes “Renew Michigan Plan”

The Senate recently passed the Renew Michigan Plan. The plan will lower business taxes and restrain government spending in order to help get Michigan’s economy back on track. Renew Michigan calls for cutting business taxes by at least \$1 billion during the next six years, starting with a \$100 million reduction in 2006. It also restrains government spending growth to the rate of inflation plus 1 percent. In addition, the plan sets the stage for an additional \$1.4 billion in business-tax cuts and automatic deposits in the state’s “rainy day fund.” The Senate’s initial Renew Michigan tax plan eliminated the School-To-Work Apprenticeship SBT Credit.

Senator Garcia was successful in securing an amendment that would continue to exempt the School-To-Work Apprenticeship SBT Credit. The amendment would continue to promote the business tax policy Michigan needs to promote tax incentives directly tied to education, training and employment with verification. This SBT credit is targeted at students who are receiving an education, learning a skilled trade and being employed.